



Hon. Robert T. Matsui

Member of Congress

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Robert T. Matsui
Serving California's 5th District

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REP. MATSUI STATEMENT IN HONOR OF JAPANESE-AMERICAN INTERNMENT DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

WASHINGTON, DC—Today marks the 61st Anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, which led to the internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans without due process during World War II. U.S. Representative Robert T. Matsui (D-CA) made the following statement:

“Today marks the sixty-first anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066. With the stroke of a pen, more than 120,000 individuals were uprooted without cause or trial, forcibly removed from their homes and communities, and incarcerated against their will. The decision to intern Japanese-Americans was not based on military necessity. The order served no military need. Rather, the United States government displayed a startling lack of political leadership in a time of crisis by succumbing to a climate of fear, war hysteria, and racial prejudice.

“Over the course of several decades, our nation has undertaken the difficult task of coming to terms with its own history. It has not been easy. For forty-three long years after the internment, the government refused to acknowledge this tragic injustice. But in 1988, as the result of a heartfelt, grassroots campaign, the U.S. government officially apologized for a decision that was clearly and entirely wrong. It was wrong when the order was signed in 1942, and history has only reinforced that sober judgment. The redress legislation was a triumph for American democracy. It takes a strong and confident nation to look introspectively at its own actions and admit that it made a mistake.

“Learning from history can sometimes be a long and difficult process. Nevertheless it is at the heart of forging the ‘more perfect union’ envisioned in our Constitution. On this Day of Remembrance, we should recommit ourselves to this task. It is absolutely critical that today’s leaders learn the lessons of the past and exercise principled political leadership, particularly as our nation again finds itself in a time of uncertainty and emergency.

“Today’s anniversary presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the stigma and pain caused by the internment, and to continue to educate and share the lessons of history with all Americans, no matter how painful they may be. That is the only way to ensure that we never again sacrifice the core values of our democracy and Constitution in times of fear or crisis.”

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